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A SLEEPLESS NIGHT IN THE TROPICS.

A SLEEPLESS night is disagreeable anywhere, but especially so in the Tropics. Thus I thought as I lay twisting and turning on a fiery hot mattress, which seemed warm enough to form an alternative torment with the rack and other inquisitorial tortures. I was in the fourteenth parallel of north latitude, and the day before, the broiling sun had passed straight overhead and left every object frizzling under his perpendicular gaze. As I tossed about on my moist pillow, I reflected on these things, and could not help anathematising the cross-grained luck which had sent me to the fourteenth parallel of north latitude. This is rather a vague way of locating a place, however, and may include any region between Central America and the Philippines; but for the information of geographically inclined readers, I will add that my bed was traversed by the ninety-eighth degree east longitude. If any one should take the trouble to look up in the map of the world where these two lines cross each other, it will be found that this inquisitorial bed of mine is situated in an out-of-the-way corner of South-eastern Asia, in Siam, otherwise called the Land of the White Elephant.

It was the month of April, when in temperate climes the 'young man's fancy lightly turns to thoughts of love'; but here our fancy is turned to ices, cold baths, and other cooling means, for April is the hottest month in the year. This night, I would have given a kingdom, if I had possessed it, for a piece of ice. I had read somewhere that an unfailing means to procure sleep is to bind two pieces of ice tightly over the eyes; but of course one does not think of going to bed with two pieces of ice in anticipation of a sleepless night. I tried, however, a good many other dodges, such as going through the Greek alphabet—which in my school-boy days would have been crowned with immediate success—counting slowly up to a thousand, keeping my mental eye fixed on some stationary object—but all in vain.

Fickle Dame Sleep was not to be courted, and with a muttered anathema I turned to speculate on the causes of my sleeplessness.

Was it the heat? No; I thought not, for I used to sleep peacefully through hotter nights than that—nights which drenched my *pyjamas* with perspiration, and left me in the morning wet as if stranded a shipwrecked sailor on the surf-beaten shore. Was it those prawns with which my Chinese cook had flavoured the burning curry I had taken at dinner? Or was it that post-prandial cup of fragrant Mocha which I had sipped with such enjoyment, while building gay airy castles in the curling smoke of my Havanas? Was it not that game of billiards, under the blazing lamps, in a temperature close upon one hundred degrees Fahrenheit, followed by two buckets—glasses, I cannot call our tropical drinking-measures—of heavy lemon squash? I sadly came to the conclusion that the last bucket of lemon squash had been too much for me.

We are strange creatures, we European residents in Siam. Not content with heat during the day sufficient to roast the proverbial ox, we must make night unendurable in the close stuffy atmosphere of the Club billiard-room, and then attempt to 'damp' ourselves down with innumerable iced drinks, ruinous alike to pocket and digestion. It seems incongruous to think of a commonplace lemon squash causing insomnia in the heart of Indo-China. One would prefer it to be 'a fierce encounter with a white elephant,' 'a desperate tiger-hunt,' 'a hairbreadth escape from a deadly cobra,' or some other strange adventure which would look well from a literary point of view. It mattered little to me, however, whether it was 'a hairbreadth escape' or only a lemon-squash, for sleep I could not.

Not a breath of air moved the close atmosphere; and my surrounding canopy of mosquito-netting seemed to render it all the more suffocating. We don't trouble with many bed-clothes in the Tropics. Blankets there were none, and my sleeping apparel consisted of a 'sarong' or piece of cotton cloth about the loins. I now

gave up all attempts to sleep, and allowed one vague fancy after another to course through my brain, unhindered by Greek alphabets or numerical calculations. My Dutch wife I rudely tossed aside—start not, gentle reader, a Dutch wife is not a creature of flesh and blood, but only an inanimate bolster for resting the knees upon—and spent the next quarter of an hour in vain endeavours to slaughter a buzzing mosquito which had passed the barrier of my net. Trying to kill a mosquito is very disappointing work. I would hear him swooping down with a fiendish booming. I prepared to launch a terrible stroke at him, and when he landed on the tip of my ear or the point of my nose, I would nearly knock my head off with the violence of my open-handed blow. I felt sure that his blood—or mine rather—was trickling slowly down my face; but in another minute I would again hear his infernal buzzing; and thus the exasperating little tragedy would be repeated *ad infinitum*.

Tired of these blood-thirsty manœuvres, in which I always came off second best, I got up, and had recourse to my bathroom. 'If I can't sleep,' I soliloquised, 'I'll at least be cool and free from mosquitoes.' My bath-room is simply a part of the veranda laid with zinc, and contains a large tub of water as furniture. I lit the lamp, and calmly sat down in the tub, with the water up to my neck and a lighted cheroot in my mouth. The water was quite warm, and must have been at least about eighty-five degrees Fahrenheit. I thoroughly enjoyed this midnight bath, and hoped that the temperature of my seething brain would be somewhat reduced thereby. My cheroot finished, and feeling just a trifle chilly, I hastily rubbed myself down and got back to bed.

To my great exultation, I succeeded in killing my mortal enemy the mosquito by a first lucky stroke; but no sooner was I settling into a delightful doze, than piercing screams disturbed the peaceful midnight air. 'My old friends the cats,' I groaned.

Siamese cats are justly famous for their beauty, grace, and amiability, and for these reasons some people are anxious to have the race preserved in all its pristine strength. They are also notorious for the most horrible caterwauling; and I am strongly of the opinion that for this reason alone they ought to be mercilessly exterminated. Caterwauling may be heard in other parts of the world, but it is not cultivated till it becomes an exquisite art of nightly torture as it is in Siam. Here the passions are excited to a degree unknown in colder climates, and expression is given to them with an undescrivable intensity and fervour. There is a shady grove of bananas just underneath my bedroom window, and there all the feline Romeos and Juliets of the neighbourhood—and they are not a few—are accustomed to come and pour into each other's ears their undying tale of love. They were having a

special performance this night, to judge from the unearthly groans, squeaks, and yells. I waited some time, in the vain hope that they would move on and give their charming serenade elsewhere; but I was reluctantly forced to get up. Three pairs of boots and slippers did I hurl in quick succession, crashing through the giant leaves of the bananas, and then silence was restored. I soon discovered that my troubles were only beginning.

If cats are a nuisance in Siam, the dogs are worse than any Egyptian plague. Imagine a huge Oriental city swarming with hosts of homeless dogs continually on the move, snarling and barking and making night hideous. The tenets of the Buddhist religion forbid the pious Siamese from killing these brutes, and they multiply and replenish the earth to an alarming extent. The theories of Malthus here find among the dogs a striking verification. Were the means of subsistence to increase as rapidly as the dogs, they would soon be as innumerable as the sands on the sea-shore; but it is a blessing that most of them die of sheer starvation. Those that do survive this terrible struggle for food are fierce and gaunt to a degree, while they have a bark as hoarse and horrible as we can imagine the bark of Cerberus to have been.

As I lay still slowly repeating the Greek alphabet, one of these wretches lifted his voice, and immediately the chorus was taken up by wandering brutes like himself, and by those that act as faithful watchdogs. The waves of sound went widening out as do the ripples on a pond when a stone is dropped into its still depths, till I thought the whole city must rise up in wrath and slaughter every dog. At last the panic died away from utter weariness, and nothing could be heard but one persistent yelping cur stationed not fifty yards from my own door. He held on with a constancy worthy of a nobler cause, and was answered by a faint distant 'bow-wow' at least two miles away on the other side of the river. This melodious duet was kept up till I was nearly lulled to sleep by its unvarying monotony; but such luck was not to be mine, apparently.

There was yet a third plague in store for me—the plague of crowing cocks; and only those who have resided in Bangkok and are troubled with insomnia can form any idea of it. When I was a hard student in the London suburbs, I made a special agreement with my landlady that she was not to keep cocks and hens, and that if any of her neighbours should do so within a radius of half a mile, I would immediately quit my rooms. Unfortunately, no such arrangements can be made here. It would bankrupt a Cræsus to buy up all the cocks within a radius of one hundred yards. A love of cock-fighting is one of the strongest Siamese passions. Everybody keeps a fighting-cock, pets, pampers, and caresses it as fondly as does an old maiden lady at home her

favourite spaniel. My cook has one. My 'boy' and my coolie each has one, and there are terrible battles behind the house occasionally.

The clock was just striking one when my boy's cock crowed. His two rivals immediately responded, and again another wave of sound went rippling over the city. Defiance rose in every shrill 'cock-a-doodle-doo.' Defiance was hurled from one side of the river to the other. Defiance shrieked itself hoarse for miles around.

I got up in despair, and looked out over the veranda. The moon was rising pale and radiant, and threw a silvery glimmer on the ghost-like palms and the spires of the fantastic pagodas which rose in the distance. The faintest suspicion of a breeze was now rustling through the gigantic arms of the spreading bamboo that overshadowed the house. I sat on the veranda in my airy costume, and had some satisfaction in gazing dreamily upon the mild beauty of the night. The delightful scent of the 'Queen of the Night,' a white flower which sheds its perfume only in the darkness, filled the atmosphere with its luxurious odour. The neighbouring green-painted château seemed in this flood of romantic moonlight more the creation of some genii of the *Arabian Nights* than the abode of simple John Johnston the rice-merchant. I was new to the Tropics, and still revelled in the entrancing beauty of a moonlight night. There was no cessation of noise, however. The cicadas chirped as loud as birds, huge beetles droned their lazy onward path, and the whole air throbbed and boomed with invisible creatures.

The loud sound of something overhead shouting 'Tookay! tookay!' aroused me from my reverie, and as I looked up I saw the crocodile-like form of the tookay, as is its onomatopoeic name—a reptile of the lizard tribe, about a foot long, and of a dark colour. This tookay was not unknown to me. He had often startled me before with his peculiar cry, and I had made many endeavours to catch him with a noose at the end of a bamboo stick, as he scampered along the walls. I was in hopes that he might call out thirteen times, for this is reckoned particularly lucky for the listener; but at the close of eight calls he finished up with a funny grunt—a chuckle of the greatest satisfaction, I should think, of having disturbed as many people as he could.

Another eerie sound fell upon my ear, the cry of some benighted cake-seller in her canoe upon the river. Poor old woman! her tale of little sugar-cakes was yet unsold, and this being the evening of a native festival, she was still making the echoes ring with her quavering falsetto voice. Not so pleasant was the sound of the drunken revelry of a party of European sailors as they rattled past in a 'gharry' or native cab on their way to their floating home, a long way down the river.

Finding sleep impossible, I lit my lamp again and whiled away some time by penning the above narration of a few of the inflictions which a sleepless night in the Tropics incurs.

I feel dreadfully sleepy now. I hope the reader does not. However, I am off to bed for

the third time; and Siamese cats, dogs, and cocks may do their worst, for I am sure that ten o'clock in the morning will still find me wrapped in profound slumber.

A SOLDIER AND A GENTLEMAN.*

By J. MACLAREN COBBAN,
Author of *The Cure of Souls*, *Tinted Vapours*,
Master of His Fate, &c.

CHAPTER XII.—THEY TWO.

FERRERS was out of bed very early; for he had slept little and had little mind for sleep. He drew up his blind, opened his window, and looked out over the lovely sunlit landscape. Its beauty went to his heart, but only to darken by contrast his secret wretchedness. But his way was clear, and he would take it without turning to the right hand or to the left. Meantime, he resolved to dress and go out.

It struck five by the clock in the stable tower as he left the house and walked away through the grounds. He did not linger in the garden, but struck across the park, where the cattle raised their heads from their early grazing to stare at him. He discovered soon that he was not the only early riser. As he climbed over a hillock in his course he noticed some little way off two men disappear into a clump of holly-trees and brushwood, at the end of the larch plantation. Something in the set and gait of one of the figures made him think of his midnight visitor. He did not particularly wish to meet and converse with him again; but he was curious to see what he was out for. The clump into which Dawlish and his companion—probably his 'man'—had vanished was continued in the plantation across Ferrers' line of route, and to its nearest point Ferrers made at a sharp pace.

When he reached it he saw a little way off a hollow glade—somewhat like a spoon at the end of its handle—and in the glade the two men with their coats off and with their shirt sleeves rolled up. With interest quickened into alarm he slipped nearer, and saw that the men were preparing to box with gloves, and was satisfied. He lingered, however, to witness a round or two, and to hear the one (young Dawlish) say, 'That's enough for a morning breather,' and the other reply, 'No, no, sorr; that isn't enough. Up wid your mauleys;' and then he withdrew, and returned towards the house.

He was within the enclosure of the garden proper when he saw another early riser still, who made him hesitate, and feel as if he would like to hide or run away. It was Dolly in a morning robe of white, and with a red parasol to shade her from the sun. The burden of the confession he had to make was as lead in his heart and on his feet; but he was drawn on in spite of himself, for he knew she had seen him, and when her bright look was bent on him, to her he must always turn. He did not know what he meant to do or to say; he only felt that he must present himself to her, lay himself and his deceptions bare to her, and let her judge him.

He was approaching her, and she was waiting for him with a smile, when down one of the

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gravel walks trotted Aunt Dawlish in a great straw hat. 'Dolly dear,' she called, 'you must be getting your feet wet on the dewy grass.'

'I'm not, aunt,' said Dolly. 'What a fidget you are! But, to please you, I'll stand on the gravel.'

'You'd better come in, my dear,' said Aunt Dawlish, now close to her; 'it's much too early for you to be out. You'll quite spoil your complexion with these absurd country ideas. Besides,' she continued, taking her arm and whispering in her ear—

Whatever it was that Aunt Dawlish said in her ear, it made her blush divinely.

'Adieu, cousin,' said she, 'for the present; and she departed into the house.'

He hung about the garden till he was weary; he saw Drew come out—this day with Drumlly—after an early breakfast, and depart again in a wagonette to take the train to town; he kept out of the way, for he did not wish to talk with the bankers then, and by-and-by he heard the breakfast-bell ring, and went in. He was unavoidably somewhat cold and distant in his 'Good-morning' to Sir William; nor was he very good company at table. Now and again he found Dolly's eyes wistfully fixed on him, and his heart was wrung with grief and dismay at what was about to happen. Yet he was resolved to take the first opportunity to bring things to an issue.

It did not seem as if there would be much difficulty in arranging a private interview between himself and Dolly; for there was no excursion, Debrett being gone for the day, and Drew and Drumlly on a visit to town—on the business of the projected marriage doubtless. Yet it was long before he could encounter her alone, Aunt Dawlish kept such dragon-guard over her. At length in desperation he resolved to do as she had had once done herself when she desired an interview.

'I want,' he wrote on a slip of paper, 'to talk with you alone very particularly. The Picture Gallery won't do. Meet me in an hour in the hollow in the larch plantation.' He rolled the paper up into a tiny cylinder, and watching his opportunity as he sauntered by, he dropped it into Dolly's lap as she sat reading on a shady bench in the company of Aunt Dawlish and Mrs. Drew. That done, he moved away, and by a roundabout route made for the plantation. At the end of about half an hour he was in the hollow glade where he had seen young Dawlish and his 'man' sparring in the early morning. He had quite half an hour to wait, and, to consume the time and allay his restlessness and the foolish flutters that invaded even his great chest, he set himself to cut and shape a holly-stick.

At last he heard the rustle of a footstep, and his heart leaped within him, less—alas!—with joy, than with grief and pain. She came—his own, his sweet!—to whom he could never tell how sweet and dear she was. He went with slow steps to meet her, trying the strength of his stick as he went, trying it so that he snapped it. But it did not break clean; it was green and tough, and the lacerated fibres still held together.

'I wonder,' he thought, 'if that is how this parting is going to be!'

When they met, she looked open-eyed and dis-

turbed. 'What is the matter?' she asked. 'I see there is something. There seems to be something the matter with every one to-day. I saw a strange man cross the end of the garden this morning. I told Aunt Dawlish, and said what he was like, and she looked fit to drop with fright, and begged me not to speak about it. The curious thing is that I feel as if I ought to know him.'

'What was he like?' asked Ferrers, with a sure expectation of the answer.

'He was as tall as you, but narrow all about here'—indicating her own chest—'and pinched, as if he had grown up in a tight place; and he looked at me, and smiled, and bowed like an idiot, till a man that was with him took him by the arm, and led him away. I wish I could think who he is.'

'Miss Dawlish,' said Ferrers, nerving himself to open the great exposure, 'that is the very thing I asked you here to tell me about. That man you saw is your cousin, *William Dawlish*: I am not.'

She gazed at him a moment with wide-open, startled eyes. Then she shrank back a step, and put up her hands to her face, as if she would hide herself. Her feeling was clear. She was ashamed through all her nature that she had been frank, and even bold—as the world counts boldness—with a man who proved to be an utter stranger!

'Oh!' she cried. 'What dreadful thing is this?' 'I am afraid,' said Ferrers, 'I have done you great wrong; but you may be sure I never meant it.'

'Who are you, then?' she asked.

'My name,' said he, 'is George Ferrers.'

'But what are you?'

'I am nothing,' said he, with proud resolve to strip himself bare of quality. 'I have been a soldier.'

'And you are an artist, I suppose,' said she, with who knows what quick, instinctive desire to see him retain some quality or function with which she had believed him invested.

'I am something of an artist,' said he.

'And is that why there are the initials "G. F." on your pictures?'

'Yes; that's why.'

'But why—oh, why—have you come about me and told lies, and pretended you were my cousin? You had some reason for doing it, I suppose? Why have you behaved to me as you have, and made me behave to you?'

'I have not told lies,' Ferrers had a mind to say; but he perceived that would be but paltering with words, since he could not deny he had been acting lies to her.

'I was introduced to your uncle, Sir William,' said he, 'and he asked me to take the name of William Dawlish.'

'My uncle knows of this, then?' she asked.

'Yes,' said he. 'I would have told you before—the day after we came here—but he said you knew.'

'He said I knew? And you believed him?'

'I was fool enough to take his word as a gentleman, and I didn't know what to think.'

'And my aunt?—does she know, too?'

'Yes; she does, too.'

'Oh! Dreadful! And what has it been done for? Surely, not for a joke?'

'I began it,' said Ferrers, 'as a joke; but I have found that it is very serious; and that is why—partly why—I have determined to tell you the truth as I have discovered it. Your uncle wants you to marry his son, your cousin, and he was afraid your trustees would not agree to the marriage, if they knew and saw his son.'

'Why?'

'Because he is not man enough to marry,' said Ferrers desperately; 'because he is weak in body and in mind—because he is an imbecile.'

'And my uncle asked you,' said she with scorn, 'to appear as the necessary person, because you are not an imbecile? He put you forward in the part, and you played it. You came and smiled and danced with me, and talked confidential lies to me in the most cousinly way! I must congratulate you on the finish you gave to your part. Perhaps you had played it often before?'

'Never!—never!' said Ferrers, with the air of a patient, strong man protesting against the wantonness of blows showered on him.

'And how were you to be rewarded, may I ask, for the playing of your part?—your part of stalking-horse to my uncle's son?'

'I was to receive a sum of money,' answered Ferrers.

'Money?' she exclaimed. 'You engaged to smile and dance with me, and to talk to me, and walk with me, and sketch with me for money? Oh, how miserable, how mean, how shameful!'

'Hear me,' pleaded Ferrers. 'You don't understand. When I met Sir William, and he proposed this to me, I was very poor—I had scarcely any money at all—scarcely any. You might not believe me if I told you how little. I was glad to get the chance of occupation and money, and I promised to do what was asked of me, without knowing or guessing what I would be asked to do. If I had imagined I was going to bring trouble or grief to you, I would have died rather!'

'And why do you think you have brought trouble and grief, as you say, to me? I have no doubt that to-morrow or the next day I shall look back on it as a very curious and original joke.'

He said no word, though his heart was bursting; but he could not refrain from turning on her, eyes as simply appealing as those of a dumb animal.

'Oh, man, man!' she cried, 'have you not a word to say for yourself?—not a word?' She put her hands to her face, and sank on the ground in a fit of weeping, while Ferrers, longing to go to her aid and yet not daring, stood with clenched hands and heaving chest.

'No; I've not a word!' he murmured blindly to himself. 'Not a word shall I say!—not a word! It serves me right! It serves me right!'

'And why,' she asked, after a pause, 'have you kept this so long?—or, rather, having kept it so long, why have you not kept it longer?'

'Because,' said he, 'as I have told you, Sir William deceived me, and because I have just discovered the truth. I knew last night for the first time that there really is a cousin whom you are intended to marry; and last night I saw him—saw that he is a creature no woman, least of all you, ought to marry.'

'And why not? It is surely not for you to say whom I am, or am not, to marry!'

'No,' said Ferrers; 'it is not for me to say; but I hope you will not marry him. It would be better for you to be dead than married to him!'

'You are a very presuming person to say that to me! A complete stranger to express such an opinion of my own cousin!—one of my own family! I remember my cousin very well; and I liked him. He may not be so big and strong a creature as you are, but I'm glad, yes, glad he is not. And if my uncle wishes it, and he wishes it, I shall marry him, whatever any one may say.'

'Call me what names you like; I deserve the unkindest and cruellest things you can say to me; but do not let yourself be deceived and hurried into a marriage with that man! And you may be deceived and hurried before you are aware.'

'I am quite able to take care of myself; I am mistress of my own actions; and I beg you will not give me any more of your advice.'

'If you will not save yourself by my advice, then I must save you in spite of yourself. I do not wish to interfere any more in your family matters, and make a fuss; but if you persist in going through with this mad business, I must!'

'Go away! I will not hear you any more. I will not talk to you any more. Go away! And I hope I shall never see your face again. Go away!'

He stood a moment with hands outspread, with bursting heart, and swaying form. Then, 'Yes,' he murmured—'yes; I'll go away—I'll go away!' So he turned and walked out of the hollow, while she watched him, with her hands tight clasped upon her panting bosom. But he did not look back; did not show a hint of hesitation to obey her command to go away and let his face be seen no more. He walked on, steadily on, down the narrow vista of larches, and disappeared.

He felt beaten sore by the hands that he loved, all the sorer that those hands seemed pitiless. All his world was tumbled about his ears—life and love, hopes and fears, desires and ambitions—and he stumbled blindly on out of the cool shade of the wood into the blazing sunlight of the park. Why had she been so hard with him—so terribly hard? Yet he loved her!—loved her all the more distractingly for the pain she had given him! And how she had smitten and scourged him with her words! She had shown a strength of feeling, an intensity of passion of which he had not thought her possessed. It was all over now—all over between them! (she had begged that she might not see his face again!) but still he admired her all the more for that last meeting. There was, however, a wild sense of rage and revolt gathering in his heart, which found no vent, and which was the more dangerous and reckless because of the shielding tenderness with which he must still regard Dolly.

Crossing the park, he spied Sir William, and at once his feeling of rebellion and rage rose to find its issue. He turned out of his course and strode towards him. Sir William waited for him.

'Well?' he cried genially from a little way

off. But when he saw Ferrers' pale, set face, he was on his guard. 'Halloa!' he said. 'Is something gone wrong?'

'Everything's gone wrong!' said Ferrers. 'But I shall not waste words on you. You have used me for your own mean purposes, and I hate you. You have lied to me, as one man should not lie to another without suffering for it in his carcase. I do not want to hear another word from your mouth; I have heard too many. I overheard all your talk last night with your sister; I had a pleasant visit from your son in the night; and now I just come from telling your niece all I know.'

'The devil!' exclaimed Sir William.

'Yes,' said Ferrers; 'I wish I could be as strong and merciless as the devil with you!'

'Ha!' sneered Sir William. 'Now, I suppose, that your business is done in your own way, you want your money.'

'I want none of your dirty money,' said Ferrers, laying a firm grip on the baronet's shoulder—a grip which he wriggled to be rid of, but which held him effectually, 'nor any more of your insolence. You'd better go and attend to your niece up there; and mark this: if with your deceit or persuasion, or anyhow, you get her married to that idiot son of yours, I'll wring your wicked, lying old neck. You understand?' And he gripped the shoulder painfully; but Sir William did not wince, nor put off his careless manner.

'That would be murder,' said he, with one of his old grins.

'It may be,' said Ferrers, 'for all I care; and it will be, if you neglect what I have said.' So saying, he let Sir William go, and strode on towards the house.

CONCERNING ETCHING.

THOUGH, doubtless, there are many people who understand what is meant by 'Etching' and what the process is, we have met a considerable number who by their remarks have proved conclusively to us either that they have no ideas at all about it, or that the few ideas they have are very vague and uncertain. It is for this reason that we intend to explain as shortly and as clearly as possible what is really meant by 'etching' and how it is done.

We remember on one occasion calling upon a lady, when, owing to some remark of ours about a picture which was hanging opposite to us, our conversation turned upon this subject, and our hostess told us that she admired this branch of art immensely. After having shown us the small collection which she had made, in which we discovered some little bits very cleverly and prettily executed, she told us that her son had a taste for drawing, and that lately he had turned his attention to etching with some fair success. As we take a great interest in this pursuit, we expressed a wish that we might be allowed to see some of his results. After a few minutes' absence our hostess returned with her son's handiwork. Yes; they were very neat effective

little bits, done with a delicate freedom of style; and on the whole they were fair specimens of—pen-and-ink sketches, but not etchings at all.

On many other occasions we have been similarly misled, and often disappointed for the same reason; and have more than once been asked to explain what 'real etching' is.

In the first place, the very sound of the word 'etch,' which is derived from the German *ätzen*, suggests to us our word 'eat;' and in this lies the true art of etching. An etched line is a line eaten into a plate by the action of some acid which will decompose the plate. A pen-and-ink line is not an eaten line, and therefore not an etched one, and for this reason a pen-and-ink drawing is not an etching. The proof or print which we see of this work is really an 'impression' only, the etching, properly speaking, being on the plate itself; but since without the work on the plate, such impressions as these could not be produced, and without these impressions the beauty and accuracy of the execution could not be gauged, and the whole art would be useless, it is customary to call these impressions 'etchings.'

The following sketch of the process is quite a rough one, for we should not have space to enter minutely into details, nor, indeed, by so doing should we be fulfilling our original intention, which was merely to explain the art of etching sufficiently to prevent further misunderstandings.

The plate upon which the etching is worked has one side—that upon which the work is to be done—perfectly smooth and even, and without the minutest flaw. It is usually made of copper, but sometimes of zinc. Iron and steel, too, have been used; but the results are not good. The preparation of the plate is the work of the copper-smith, and requires great delicacy and care; but some etchers do even this part of the process for themselves.

Having got his plate ready for use, the etcher then proceeds to cover it on the working side with a waxy substance which is called 'ground.' The instrument with which he transfers his design on to the plate when the ground is laid is a needle of steel driven into a wooden handle. But in working the design on to the plate the etcher does not make any mark on the plate itself, for he simply traces it in the 'ground,' the point of the needle forming a line by scraping away the ground as it moves along. This ground must therefore fulfil the following conditions: It must resist the action of the acid into which the plate is to be subsequently immersed. It must adhere firmly to the plate. It must be of such a nature as to come away on the touch of the needle-point in a clear line without breaking up on either side.

This ground is formed by mixing up waxes, gums, and resins in different combinations. There are several ways of laying it on the plate. It can be done either by melting it and dabbing it over the plate by means of a pad made of horse-hair tied up in silk; or by dissolving it in oil of lavender and rolling it on with a small roller; or else by dissolving it in chloroform and pouring it on to the plate, letting it run all over quickly, and draining off what is superfluous at one corner. The ground when laid forms a very

thin even coating over the whole working surface of the plate.

The ground being laid, there is yet another process before the plate is ready to take the design. The plate is heated so as to melt the ground, and it is then blackened by holding it face downwards over a gas jet; the smoke of the flame mixes with the melted ground, so that, when cool again, it presents a black shining surface. The object of this is to aid the etcher when he works his sketch on to the plate, for, as he draws each line in the ground with the needle-point, it shows up a beautiful copper line against the black of the ground.

There is one very important point to bear in mind when working a design on to the plate—that is, the sketch in the proof will come out reversed to that which is drawn on the plate. Therefore, if it is desired to be a true and not merely a pretty picture, the sketch must be drawn on the plate the reverse to what appears in nature. This may be done by using a looking-glass, or by making the sketch on a piece of paper with a soft pencil, and then damping it and turning it pencil-side down on to the ground, and pass it through a press. Of course, in the latter case the drawing appears on the plate in gray lines on the black; these lines have to be gone over with the needle in order to lay bare the copper.

When the design is completed on the plate, it is ready for the bath. The bath consists of a solution of nitric acid or some other similar mordant. The only parts of the plate upon which this can act are the lines drawn by the etcher's needle, where the ground has been removed; all the rest of the plate is protected on the face by the ground, and on the back and edges by a black varnish which is laid on for this purpose. So long as the plate remains in the acid, these lines are eaten deeper and deeper into the plate. The deeper the line is eaten into the plate the darker it will appear in the impression; therefore those lines which are required to show faintly must not be sunk deep into the plate—that is, must not be eaten long by the acid. Thus, when the plate has remained a little while in the bath, it is taken out, and the places which are wanted to print faintly are 'stopped-out.' By 'stopping-out' is meant that these places are covered over with some varnish, to prevent the acid from acting upon them any more. When this has been done the plate is returned to the bath again, and this process is repeated until the darkest lines of all have been sufficiently eaten in.

Now the plate is washed in water, and the ground and varnish removed with turpentine, when it is ready for the printer. The printer having received the plate and selected his ink—a thick and greasy substance—proceeds to warm the plate and then fill in the ink by means of a dabber. When he has satisfactorily done this, the ink is wiped off the edges and the plate is laid in the press; the paper is slightly damped and laid on the plate; the blankets are pulled over it, and it goes through the press. Impressions from an etched plate are of two kinds—proofs and prints. The proofs are the earliest impressions and of a certain number. These are signed by the artist, whereas prints are not signed.

There are perhaps few pursuits which raise more interest and excitement than etching does. During the process of execution, the artist conjures up in his mind the picture as he expects to find it in the impression; he is as it were working in the dark. In the case of beginners, there is a grave doubt as to whether the result will be at all presentable, for the difference between what he expects and what he finds to be the result is often astounding. As for the experienced hand, though he knows almost exactly what his proof will be like, he cannot tell whether the general effect will be just what he expects and intends.

DEAREST IS DEAREST.

By T. PRESTON BATTERSBY.

IN THREE CHAPTERS.—CHAP. I.

A SHORT November afternoon was drawing near to its close. Winter had not yet fully set in in Ireland, and the air was still mild; but a thick damp mist hung over the river Liffey and the low-lying meadows around, and rolled in dense masses up the old coach-road and through the village of Ballinalack. Every leafless twig in the hedges condensed it, and was loaded with drops of water, which dripped steadily on the wet grass as they became large enough to fall by their own weight, for there was not wind enough to disturb them. The thatched roofs with their mossy coverings were great sponges of moisture; and the ducks splashed about gaily in the puddles, rejoiced that they could find plenty of water for their ablutions without taking the trouble to waddle down to the river. In fact, it was a day on which an Englishman would have vituperated the weather heartily and retired to read a novel in front of a cheerful fire.

But to the damp-inured natives of Ballinalack it was no more than a 'fine soft day—thank the Lord!' A few of them even took the trouble to put on their gray frieze overcoats. The village street was full of them; the men leaning their backs against any convenient wall, and smoking their clay pipes in passive enjoyment of that *dolce far niente* which they can appreciate as much as any Italian of the sunny South; the women gossiping, running into and out of each other's houses, scolding and smacking the dirty children who were playing in the puddles, and altogether having a busy time of it. The public-houses—of which there seemed to be at least one for every private house in the village—were doing a good business, as they generally did. As for the fact that there was not a respectable dwelling in the place, or a clean spot to rest the eye upon, or a window without a broken pane in it, no one remarked that, or, had they remarked it, would have cared in the least that it should be so. They were perfectly satisfied with the order of things, and no reformer had come that way to make them discontented.

There was, however, on this particular afternoon, a lack of material for conversation, of which they were dimly conscious. No one had sold a horse lately, or lost a cow in a 'gripe,' or been sent to jail; nor had even the river amused them that summer by flooding their hayfields, and so postponing the season of haymaking to

some indefinite time before Christmas. The Inny Drainage had changed all that. It was a perfect godsend when the wheels of a car were heard accompanied by the footsteps of a fast-trotting horse, and it became evident that some one was about to pass through the village.

The car came at last—a smart, well-painted vehicle, with one footboard turned up to serve as a shelter for the seat on that side. A fine thoroughbred mare was in the shafts, and it was driven by a young man of thirty or thereabouts, who wore a brown cap with ear-flaps, and an immense ulster with a heavy cape. Several of the loungers touched their hats to him as he drove rapidly past, and he acknowledged the salutation by a slight movement of his hand, but without looking up, or attempting to moderate the speed at which he drove, though ducks flew, and hens screeched, and mothers snatched their children out of the way. In a minute or two he had passed the village and was well on his way towards Bunbrosna. Then broke forth a volley of ejaculations and gossip.

‘Musha, then, Master Charles is in a hurry this fine day,’ said one stalwart man as he wiped the mud off his coat with a wisp of hay. ‘Sorrah much he cares for the likes of us. Look at me new coat, that I bought in Edgeworthstown last January; sure, he’s destroyed it entirely!’

‘What harm if he did?’ remarked a woman. ‘You can well afford to buy another, Tim Higgins! And why wouldn’t he be in a hurry when Biddy Moran says the old man is mortal bad and his reverence wanted at once?’

‘Whew!’ said another man, with a long whistle. ‘That’s the way of it, is it? And so the fiend will have his will of the old miser at last. It’s a long time now that he’s been waiting for him! We’ll have a new landlord now, boys, and God send us a good one, for sure they’re not too plenty.’

‘They do say that he has left all his money to Master Charles,’ said the woman who had before spoken. ‘Biddy Moran will know all about it. Sure, she was at service in the big house when he came there first. I’m going to ask her about him now; and you had better come too, Tim Higgins, if you want to know.’

This speech caused a general movement in the direction of Biddy Moran’s. That lady rejoiced in the proud possession of a Government appointment, for she was postmistress of Ballinalack, and resided in the best house of the village. It had a slated roof, and was of much superior construction to its neighbours. Probably in the old days, when the Dublin and Sligo coach ran, it may have been an inn of some pretensions; but now it was divided into three tenements, and, by virtue of rotten woodwork, loose slates, and cracked windows stuffed with rags, was striving hard to assimilate itself with the recognised system of architecture of the cabins around it. It had not quite succeeded as yet, but no doubt would do so in time. In the centre one of the three tenements lived Biddy Moran; and a proud woman was she that day when her room was crowded with an attentive audience, and she was requested to relate all that she knew of Master Charles and his ways, and whether the rumour that he was to be their future landlord were likely to be a true one. In the pride of posses-

sion of information, she first of all exercised various petty acts of tyranny, made the men put their pipes out, and insisted upon the ejection of an old woman whom she regarded as a personal enemy, and who, having been compelled by the universal sentiment of the meeting, aided by a little use of physical force, to vacate the premises, seated herself on the doorstep outside and made the air vocal with complaints and threats. Being pacified by the ready obedience of her audience, Biddy at last condescended to take a chair, accept of a half-noggin of whisky tendered her by an admirer, and begin her story, which she told readily enough, having the true Irish gift of fluency. Most of those present had heard it before, but never in such detail.

‘It will be ten years next Hallintide,’ she began, ‘since I first took service with old Dardas. I was only a slip of a girl then, and places were hard to get; and my father was behind with his rent and dreaded to be evicted by the old miser; so one day he went up to the big house to see if Dardas would give him time. The old man was as hard as nails, and must have his money down.

“Faix, then,” says my father, “you may evict me at once, for I haven’t got it to give you; and maybe you won’t get another tenant in a hurry to pay you ten pounds a year for a mud cabin that I propped up the wall of myself last summer with a stump of an ash-tree; and a couple of acres of marshy land that’s good for growing rushes and nothing else!”

‘Maybe the old fellow thought so too, for he considered in his mind a bit. “You’ve a daughter?” says he.

“I have so,” says my father.

“What age is she?” says he.

“Rising eighteen,” says my father.

“Well,” says old Dardas, “I’m in want of a servant just now; so, if you like to send her up here I’ll take her on trial and give her six pounds a year; and the first year’s wages can go to pay your arrears. After that I can deduct it from your rent.”

“Musha, then it’s yourself that’s the hard man,” says my father; “but make it ten pounds and it’s a bargain.”

“I said six,” says old Dardas, “and what I say I mean. Bring me your daughter or the money to-morrow, or you know what to expect!”

‘So the long and the short of it was that I had to go; and sure, anyhow, wasn’t it better than to have the old people (God rest their souls!) turned out on the road, with nothing to look for but the poorhouse?’

‘True for you, Biddy!’ said a sympathetic auditor, who had been through the same experience herself.

‘Murther! but that was the hard place I had of it!’ continued Biddy Moran, warmed, like a true orator, by the fellow-feeling of her audience. ‘Only that potatoes was cheap and plenty, I’d have been starved entirely; and as it was, I was famished with the cold; for the old man wouldn’t buy firing. He trusted to one tenant or another bringing him a load of turf when they wanted a favour of him; but sure there weren’t many were fools enough to do that, for mostly he kept the turf and sent them about their business. He was for ever prowling round to see I didn’t steal anything, though, dear knows, it’s little there was to

steal. When my father died and my mother went into the poorhouse, I made up my mind I'd go; but just then Master Charles came, and things got a little better.

'He was old Dardas' nephew; and I mind well the day he came, riding like a gentleman on a car from Multy Station. He had a face then that would do you good to look at; but it has altered since. He knocked at the door as if the place belonged to him, and when the old man came out, he shook hands with him as if he expected a hearty welcome. "Here I am, uncle!" says he. "You see I didn't delay long when I got your letter."

"So I perceive, sir!" says old Dardas, with a sneer on his face. "I did not expect you would!"

'And after that they went into the parlour, and left me and the car-driver to carry in the luggage. More by token the driver told me to ask the Master for a glass of whisky, and I had to tell him there was none in the house. "Faix, then," says he, as he gathered up his reins to drive off, "I wish the young gentleman joy of the place he is come to! I never yet knew good to come out of a house where they couldn't give a poor man a glass of whisky!"'

There were various murmurs of assent from the audience, who were evidently all of the car-driver's opinion. Biddy laughed, and continued her story.

'I was tidying up the kitchen that evening when Master Charles came in. He sat down in front of the fire and began to fill his pipe. "I am going to have a smoke down here, Mary," says he, "as the Master seems not to like the smell of tobacco up-stairs."

"Biddy, my name is, sir," says I, "begging your pardon for saying so."

"Of course—of course," says he, and I saw he blushed a little. "How stupid I am!" Then he got up and took a walk round the kitchen, looking at everything. "Why, Biddy," he says after a while, "you don't seem to have many cooking utensils. How do you get on at all?"

"Faix, there's plenty of them to cook all I ever have to put in them," says I. "If pots and pans were the only things wanting in this house, we'd be the better off!"

'Well, to that he said nothing, but just sat down again in his chair and smoked his pipe and looked into the fire, thinking, like. And when he had finished his tobacco, he only said "Good-night, Biddy!" and went off to his room. I thought, maybe he was offended at my free speaking; but I was determined to have my say, and not to let the old chap humbug him at the very beginning.

'Old Dardas seemed to take greatly to his nephew, and what's more, he let him have his own way in the house, and things soon began to mend. We had better food and more of it; and Master Charles glazed all the broken windows himself and mended the palings and gates; and by-and-by there came a load of furniture down, and the place began to look more home-like. I thought the old chap must be near death to be spending his money that way. But he was as hard as ever with his tenants; and except to Master Charles, I never heard him give a good word to any one.

'One morning I was bringing in the breakfast, and I thought I heard quarrelling in the parlour. They stopped when I came in; but old Dardas had a wicked look in his face that I knew well; and the young Master was reading a letter. So, when I went out, I just made a good noise going down-stairs, and then took off my brogues and stole up again in my stocking feet to strive to hear what they were saying. It was the old man that was speaking when I got to the door.

"Now, sir," he was saying, "there's no two words about it. I'm not going to have a nephew of mine marrying a girl that hasn't enough money to buy her clothes, let alone to feed herself. If you want to have her, you'll leave this; and if you want to stay, you'll just sit down and write a letter giving her up; and what's more, you'll let me read it before it goes. You shan't have it to say that I didn't deal fairly with you. You are the only relation I have of the name; and if you obey me, I mean to leave you my money when I die. Ten thousand pounds it is, and all in good Midland Railway shares; and the farm to the back of it. If that's not worth more than any girl that ever was born, be she whom she may, just say so and be off with you, for you shall be no heir of mine."

"But, uncle," says Master Charles; and then, as ill-luck would have it, a troublesome cough that I have at times began with me, and I had to hurry down-stairs again for fear I'd be caught; so I heard no more of it. But after that day I noticed a change in Master Charles. He had a kind word for me still; but his face was turned hard like, and he didn't whistle about the house the way he used to do. The old man treated him well enough, and bought him a thoroughbred to ride to the hounds, and he had the best of clothes; but sure what's them things to a man when his heart is sore?"

'True for you, Biddy!' from the audience.

'Now,' continued Miss Moran impressively, 'mind, I'll not have a word said agen him! He has a kind heart of his own, or at least he had when I knew him; and when the old miser turned me out of his house for giving a haporth of meal to a beggar that came to the back door, it was Master Charles that saved me from the workhouse, and got me put into the Post-office. He's not been to see me since, and I've heard that he's turned hard on the people, like his uncle; but mark my words—he'll make you a better landlord than ever old Dardas did.'

'Sure, he couldn't make us a worse, so that's but poor comfort, Biddy,' said a man.

'Good or bad, he'll be good enough for you, Pat,' said Miss Moran scornfully. 'The best man that ever you were, an ass and a cart could draw you!' Under cover of which brilliant piece of repartee the lady withdrew into the privacy of her shop, and her audience slowly dispersed to talk over their future prospects.

Meanwhile, the hero of so many thoughts had reached the Glebe House, and sent in his name to the clergyman, who at once admitted him to his study. It was a warm, well-furnished room, and formed a strong contrast to the outward appearance of the Rectory, which was an ugly square building, standing on low-lying land not far from the Inn, a veritable 'House on the Marsh,' always surrounded with mist and fog

during the winter months, and sometimes the whole year round when the summer was a wet one. A terrible place for children with their delicate lungs and throats, as more than one poor clergyman had learned to his cost. But its present occupant was unmarried and had a constitution of iron, and so was able to make a jest of his unenviable residence.

He came forward to meet his visitor—a fine tall man with iron-gray hair, and massive forehead and chin—not the ordinary type of a clergyman by any means, unfortunately!

Charles Dardas briefly explained his errand—his uncle was dying, and had expressed a wish to see the clergyman. There was no time to be lost; and if the Rector could conveniently drive back with him on his car, he would esteem it a great favour.

The Rector stepped forward to the hearth and put one or two sods of turf on the fire; then stood up and looked the young man in the face very gravely. 'Certainly I will go with you, Mr Dardas,' he said. 'I wish I could say "go gladly," but that would scarcely be true. I am weary of people sending for me on their deathbeds, that by some magical process I may make their peace with the Almighty, whom they have never thought of in their lives. Am I not right in supposing that your uncle never attended church—or you either, indeed, sir, since you came amongst us?'

'My uncle has never attended church since I knew him,' answered the young man coolly, and with a shade of surprise at the question in his manner. 'As for me, sir, I cannot recognise that you have any right to inquire as for my private affairs—you must forgive me for saying so.'

'I fear you are ignorant of the duties and responsibilities of a clergyman,' said the Rector quietly as he put on his overcoat. 'However, the most urgent duty at present appears to be to see your uncle; so, with your permission, we will start at once. It will be dark before we get there.'

'I have lamps on the car,' said the young man as he followed him.

Twenty minutes later they had reached the gate which closed the short, straight avenue leading up to the house of Mr Dardas. It was now quite dark; but rain had ceased, and the car lamps gave light enough to enable them to see their way, though the path was neglected, and had not, clearly, been gravelled for years. At the door of the house they were met by the successor of Biddy Moran, an unkempt Irish lass, with tangled hair and short petticoats, who was weeping profusely, as all her nation can on very slight provocation.

'Oh Master Charles,' she cried, as she saw the pair approach, 'why were you so long coming? Sure the Master is dead this ten minutes!'

The young man started slightly, but gave no other sign of emotion. Then he turned to the clergyman. 'Would you mind coming up to see him, sir?' he said, 'or would you prefer not to do so?'

'I will go!' said the Rector, and was about to mount the stairs, when he saw the servant clutch her young master by the coat and whisper something to him eagerly.

The young man laughed. 'She says, sir, that

she has laid the body out with candles; but if it displeases you, she will run on in front and put them out.'

'Leave them burning, by all means,' said the Rector. 'They cannot harm the dead, and it was a kindly thought on her part.'

Then they mounted the stairs, and Charles Dardas opened the door of his uncle's room. It was an ill-furnished ugly apartment, with no pictures or ornaments; nothing but the practically useful, and barely enough of that. At present it was, however, a blaze of light, owing to the tapers which the Irishwoman had lit at the head and foot of the bed. There was no one in the room, for the doctor had left an hour before, not expecting so speedy an end to his patient. The two men approached the bed and looked down on the face of its occupant. It had been an unlovely face always, and the hard, cruel, expression seemed to have been only intensified by death. The chin and upper lip were covered with a stubbly growth of gray hair—the result of a fortnight's want of shaving, and the open eyes glared upwards in a ghastly and intolerable manner. As they watched him, it seemed to them as though there were still some remnant of life dormant in those glassy orbs. The young man bent over and took the wrist of the limp arm in his hand, with a view to feeling if any pulse were there. The touch, light though it was, seemed to act like the shock of a galvanic battery. The apparent corpse rose in the bed and sat upright. With a wild shriek, the servant fled from the room, down-stairs, and out of the house. But the men had firmer nerves, and though greatly startled, stood where they were, and interrogated one another with their eyes.

THE UTILITY OF SMALL CURRENCY.

THE gradual cheapening of different articles has led of late years to a greater demand for the class of small bronze coins which have superseded copper money since 1860. Not much use is at present indeed made of the farthing, but the half-penny and penny coins are more in request than formerly for newspapers and stamps. The itinerant street-vendors, the shoeblacks, the automatic fixed distributing machines, the flower-girls, the penny omnibuses, and a hundred other similar demands, call upon us continually for coppers; and the public were lately glad to add to their supplies by French pennies, until these were called in and cancelled. Whether there is enough of bronze money in circulation at present is somewhat doubtful; and if it can be substituted for a coin of any better metal is a question for future consideration. The Belgian and American ten and five cent bits are certainly more cleanly and convenient than our ordinary copper coins.

In the eleven years ending with 1889, the bronze money coined at Birmingham (for the London Mint only coins silver and gold) has amounted to £513,423, or, on an average, about £46,000 in value yearly. This would give us about eleven million pennies per annum; but of course a portion of

this consists of halfpennies, and much of those in circulation are lost. In 1888 four million bronze cents were coined for Canada; 100,000 for Honduras; 500,000 for Mauritius; and 50,000 for Newfoundland; and 192,000 nickel farthings for Jamaica. Small coins are a greater necessity even in other countries than with us, and many substitutes have been, and are still, adopted in localities where the price of commodities is infinitesimally small.

The mite—a very small coin, the half of a farthing, known as 'beggars' money'—is still used as alms in Asia Minor, but is not current in the markets, being scarcely of estimable value.

Tokens, certain tradesmen's coins, were current a few centuries ago, but are now prohibited. A token was also a coin ordinarily of less value than its current price, or not of public Mint coinage. These were all called in on the revision of the coinage many years ago. The old Roman *quadrans* or farthing was the fourth part of an *as*, a coin gradually reduced in weight to half an ounce, and worth about $\frac{3}{4}$ d. or 1d.

In India they have very minute circulating mediums; thus, there is the 'pice,' a small copper coin, the fourth part of an 'anna,' the anna being nominally worth $1\frac{1}{4}$ d.

Passing farther east, we find a small metal currency is in great demand in China. The 'cash' is the common coin of the Chinese, eighty being only worth about 2d. They are made of a very base alloy of copper, are round, about the size of an English farthing, and have a square hole in the middle, by which a hundred or more are usually strung together. On one side are Chinese characters denoting the reign under which they were cast; and on the other side are either Chinese or Manchu characters designating the place of coinage.

In France and Germany, minute coins, centimes and pfennigs, ten to a penny, still circulate. The Americans have their cents.

Shell-money, in use in various parts of the world, is a curious medium of currency deserving special notice. One entire small shell, the money cowry ('*Cyprea moneta*'), is very popular, and largely employed. In Africa, the 'simbe' or cowry is the minor currency of the country. It is brought from the eastern coast by caravans. From five hundred to a thousand cowries will buy a cow in some parts. The 'tookow,' five strings, or two hundred, are worth about 8d. The 'ackee' or 'aki,' consisting of sixteen hundred cowry shells, is the monetary standard of the Gold Coast. The imports of cowries into Lagos have sometimes reached seventy to ninety thousand hundredweight, but have been declining of late years, having lost their value. In the Eastern Archipelago, about twelve hundred cowries are worth a dollar. A church in the East Indies, which cost four thousand pounds in the erection, was paid for wholly in these small shells, and it must have taken about thirty million to pay the workmen.

The ordinary gradation of value on the west coast of Africa is—forty cowries equal one string; two and a half strings, or one hundred cowries, are worth one penny; fifty strings, or two thousand, equal one head; ten heads, a bag; three heads, or six thousand, are worth about a dollar. In other places they are valued at about one and

threepence the thousand. Sometimes sixty thousand or a hundred thousand (or from three pounds fifteen shillings to seven pounds ten shillings) would be given for a young wife; whilst a more common or ordinary wife may be had for twenty thousand cowries, or twenty-five shillings.

In Soudan, much as the people trade, they have no other currency than the cowry, of which two thousand, weighing from five to seven pounds, are worth only a dollar. One of the tribes of the Khasia Hills, India, has a simple and cheap mode of divorce—the husband merely gives the woman five cowries, and she throws the shells away. They are then free to be married again.

Cowries have served the purpose of a petty currency for many centuries, and are still used for local dealings in India, the Eastern Archipelago, and parts of Africa. In the Eastern bazaars they are made use of for fractional payments, and their value rises and falls according to the demand and the quantities in the market, six to seven thousand being worth two shillings. The Hindu currency in them is about as follows: four cowries equal one ganda; twenty gandas equal one pan; sixteen pans equal one kahan. The present rate is twenty-four gandas, or ninety-six cowries, to a pice. Four pice make one anna, and sixteen annas go to the rupee; and hence $96 \times 64 = 6144$ cowries to the rupee, or two shillings.

The extension of the foreign trade has, however, caused cowries to be greatly superseded by a more portable metallic currency. Cowries are largely imported into Bombay, chiefly from the Laccadive and Maldive Islands, and Zanzibar. The imports to India average from nineteen to fifty thousand hundredweight annually. Good bright white cowries will fetch about seven pounds per hundredweight; dead shells and 'blue-backs,' as they are termed, are not worth half this price. These shells are found in myriads at the Maldive Islands, situated about four hundred miles from Ceylon. Twice a month, at neap-tides, men and women wade into the sea and gather them up from under the rocks to which they attach themselves, one person sometimes gathering as many as twelve thousand in a day. They are then buried until all signs of putrefaction have disappeared, when they are generally packed for market in triangular coconut-leaf bags, called 'pottas,' which weigh about twenty-five pounds each.

Unlike most of the mollusca, which enlarge their shells or dwellings as they grow larger, the animals of the cowry family at certain seasons cast their shells and obtain new ones; hence a number of what are termed dead cowry shells are obtained, which have a dull aspect, quite dissimilar to the bright enamelled shell which is tenanted by the living animal.

The value of cowries there has fluctuated very considerably of late years, and ranged from four hundred thousand to twelve hundred thousand to a 'dinar' of gold, or nine shillings. One hundred of these shells is called 'syah,' seven hundred, 'fal,' twelve thousand, 'cotta,' one hundred thousand, 'boston.'

Under the name of 'wampum,' certain white and black shells, strung on a ball, were used as money by some of the North American Indians. The shells used were a periwinkle, and the

round or hard clam ('*Venus mercenaria*'), a bivalve. The blue or violet portion of the latter shell furnished the material for the dark wampum, which was held in much higher estimation than that made of the white part of the shell, or of the spires of certain univalves. These formed the specie currency of the natives: six of the blue and three of the white were equivalent to an English penny.

Another shell passing as money was the tooth or tusk shell ('*Dentalium pretiosum*'), which occurs all along the northern Pacific coast of America. It is a long milk-white tubular shell, of extreme hardness, resembling in miniature the shank of a common clay pipe. It varies in length from one to four inches, and is about half an inch broad and hollow, slightly curved, and tapering a little towards the ends. From Northern California all the way to the Arctic regions, the coast tribes collected this shell, polished it, and arranged it on strings as money—a circulating medium of trade—similar to the 'wampum' of the eastern coast. There were certain rules as to fineness, arrangement, size, and measurement, which decided the value of the shells before and after stringing. The Hudson Bay Company and other traders adopted it as their current coin in buying and selling provisions and peltries. Their currency value in the fur regions was: forty shells, extending one fathom, one beaver skin; thirty-nine shells, one fathom, two beaver skins; thirty-eight shells, one fathom, three beaver skins.

Another form of aboriginal American money was made from the valves of the ponderous clam of Southern California. This money was called 'lawok,' and took the shape of perforated discs, which could be strung as beads.

BUNCOED.

It is the opera in New York. The ballet is in full swing. In one of the stage boxes are Mr Brandon, a well-to-do Yorkshire Squire; his only daughter, Constance; and Mr Morton, a local financier. 'Things of beauty,' in clouds of gauze, float silently hither and thither in a blaze of light across the stage. The local 'dude' in the stalls, as he listens to the lively strains of the viol and the flute, and levels his glasses on the lovely forms of the *première* and the *super*, feels that nothing more is wanted to produce in him a state of perfect sensuous bliss. Yet the Squire sleeps soundly all the while; Miss Constance is decidedly drowsy and a little bored; the financier alone is wide awake, though his eyes are not on the stage. Presently, the first act closes. Mr Brandon still sleeps on; Mr Morton disappears. Miss Brandon thereupon heaves a gentle sigh of relief. Suddenly, she starts, leans forward, and fixes her glasses upon a man who for some time past has been steadfastly regarding the box. When she removes them, her eyes sparkle and her face glows. She is not bored nor drowsy now. Finally, the curtain falls. Mr Morton goes for the carriage. Mr Brandon wakes up, and leaves also, followed by Miss Constance. At the door, she suddenly halts, quickly turns, advances to the front of the box, takes a bunch of carnations from her breast, throws it far into the

middle of the orchestra, and then rejoins her father—all in a moment. It falls at the feet of the first fiddle, who bows low, and instantly picks it up.

Put back, now, the dial on the clock two years; change the scene from New York to Yorkshire; look out from the study window of Staunton Castle over a fair demesne, glowing in the glory of an August sun. Turn again, then, and give ear to the last words of Sir Clement Staunton and his only nephew, Captain Clement Staunton of the —th Lancers. Yet first take stock of the two men. The elder, his once powerful limbs enveloped in a long robe, is lying back in a deep chair, idly quiescent. Beneath a black skullcap gleam deep-set gray eyes, restless and suspicious, telling of the existence of a volcano behind them still far from extinct. The other, standing in riding costume, with a hunting-crop in his hand, is a fair replica of the old man as to physique, a certain bold, defiant look being also common to both. But the suggestion of an evil heart, impressed on the countenance of the Baronet, is not to be seen on the bright sunny face of the debonair Captain.

Sir Clement. I hear, Clement, that you are again deeply in debt. Is that true?

Captain Staunton. Quite true, sir. I do owe a few hundreds.

Sir C. And pray, Captain Staunton, how do you propose to liquidate these debts, and when?

Captain S. With your kind assistance, sir, at your earliest convenience.

Sir C. This is the third time within three years that you have become involved. Your extravagance is shameful.

Captain S. On the contrary, I consider myself deserving of great credit for the moderation of my expenditure.

Sir C. Are you aware, sir, that you are a black-guard for incurring debts you cannot yourself discharge?

Captain S. Before I reply to such an impudent question, favour me, sir, if you please, with your attention for a few moments. At my father's death I became, as you know, heir-presumptive to the Baronetcy, though not to the estates. I was then eleven. You were my guardian. Two courses were open to you. You might have given me a middle-class education in a commercial atmosphere, where there would have been perhaps opportunities afforded me of making money; in which case I should not, of course, have regarded myself as heir to your estates. Or you might, on the other hand, have brought me up at a fashionable school along with those born with silver spoons in their mouths, under which conditions I should have been justified in considering myself your heir. You were pleased to choose the latter course; and accordingly I did consider myself as heir-presumptive to the family estates, which are said, by the way, to be worth some fifteen thousand a year. Now comes the point. Did you, sir, under these circumstances allow me a sufficient income to keep up the credit of the family? I say emphatically that you did not—that, on the contrary, you gave me—the prospective representative of the family, chosen as such by you—the wages, in the shape of an allowance, of your butler; and when I failed, as of course I did, to sustain

creditably my status in society on that dole, you now ask me if I am aware that I am a black-guard. In return for one question, let me put to you another. What shall I say of a man who deliberately and of set purpose places his chosen heir in such a position that he cannot avoid coming to grief, and then, when he does so, instead of throwing him a life-buoy, applies to him opprobrious epithets?

Sir C. I shall not condescend to reply to your insolence further than to recommend you to consider at your leisure this, my ultimatum. If you think proper to throw up your commission and leave the country, your debts will be paid once more, and an allowance of fifty pounds per annum made you. Should you determine otherwise, you will receive no further assistance from me, now or ever.—Good-morning.

Back again to New York.

'Well, my dear,' said the Squire to his daughter the day after the opera, 'you know Mr Morton is expecting his answer to-day; what am I to say to him?'

'Father, dear, you must tell him No—that it cannot be.'

'But are you wise? He is a good fellow.'

'Yes, I know, father. But I prefer to remain Constance Brandon than to be the wife of Mr Morton. Don't be angry with me. Read this letter, and you will understand why it is now impossible.'

The Squire took the letter. Thus it ran:

DEAR CONSTANCE—I noticed your name this morning in some paper among the lists of those staying at the *Clarendon*, and was therefore not very much surprised to see you last night. When we parted two years ago, I expected never to have seen your dear face again. Perhaps it would be wiser, under the circumstances, still to keep away from you. If you think so, you will not be at home to me at two o'clock to-morrow, when I shall call at the *Clarendon*. Yours ever—JOHN CLEMENTS, First Fiddle, *alias* CLEMENT STAUNTON.

'Well, and what do you propose to do, my dear?' said the Squire.—'Clement Staunton a first fiddle! Dear me.'

'Do, father? How can you ask?—Dear Clement!'

At two o'clock on the following day Miss Constance sat in the salon of the *Clarendon*, waiting confidently the arrival of the Captain. At three o'clock she still waited hopefully—at four o'clock anxiously; and at six o'clock she gave him up for the day. 'Of course he will write or come to-morrow,' she said to herself encouragingly. But he came not the next day, or the next to that. Nor did any letter of explanation arrive. By the end of the third day the patience of the lady became exhausted, and the Squire was ordered at once to make inquiries at the opera. He did so; but received only the unsatisfactory intelligence that the first fiddle had been absent from the orchestra for two days, and, moreover, that he had not been at his home during that period. It was the opinion of the authorities that he had been kidnapped, or otherwise made away with. The proper course for him now was to proceed to

the police, report the disappearance, and ask for advice and assistance.

On announcing his business to the inspector, that functionary quietly observed: 'I guess your friend has got among the Buncoes.'

'Excuse me, sir. Got among the Buncoes? Pray, what are the Buncoes?'

'As a Britisher,' he replied, 'you may well be ignorant of the name given here to a number of scoundrels who infest this city—a gang whose business it is to entrap or decoy into their toils those whom they consider worth being robbed or held to ransom; their prey usually being foreigners.—Yes, sir,' he continued, 'we call them Buncoes here, though they are classified in Sicily and Asia Minor as brigands.'

'Do I understand you to mean,' said the Squire, 'that people actually disappear altogether in New York?'

'When they fall into the hands of the Buncoes, they sometimes do; at others, they are merely robbed or held to ransom for a time and then released again. There are cases when, through fear of the police, they are at once set free.'

'This is indeed serious,' said the Squire.—'But what is to be done? This gentleman is a relation of my family. It will be terrible if your suspicions are correct, and he is in the hands of these miscreants.'

'There is nothing to be done, sir, but to leave the case in our hands. It will be necessary in the first instance to offer a handsome reward. Should Mr Clements have got—as is most likely the case—among these rascals, they will soon find means of letting us know the fact and their terms. Favour me now, sir, if you please, with your address. Should any news come to us, you will be duly advised. Good-morning.'

'Constance, my dear, I am the bearer of bad news. Clement Staunton has mysteriously disappeared. They know nothing of his whereabouts either at the opera or his home. On the way home I saw the inspector of police, told him all the particulars of the case, and asked his advice. He recommended me to offer a reward, and leave the case in his hands. I have done so.'

Constance Brandon and Clement Staunton were very old friends. As children they had been neighbours. Later on, they came to be something more. Then came the day of wrath, when, in an evil hour, his prospects were blighted; and he went to join the grand army of those who, through crime, misfortune, or folly, have gone under. In writing to bid her farewell, he told her the story of his folly, and that he was on his way to America with a changed name. So was she left lamenting, but free.

'Father,' said Miss Brandon as soon as she had grasped the situation, 'we can do nothing, as the inspector says, but wait for the result of the offered reward. The suspense, though, will be terrible.'

And they did wait, hour after hour, and day after day, for more than a fortnight. But no tidings came of the lost one. Nevertheless, the police had not been idle. They felt satisfied that Clements had got among the Buncoes, but could hear nothing whatever of him. Though, however, their investigations failed to obtain any intelligence of the particular man they wanted, yet, strange to say, they led to the discovery of

the captivity among them of another Englishman whom their spies reported to be a nobleman of large possessions. The inspector, in reporting to the Squire his ill success with regard to Clements, incidentally mentioned in his letter this curious discovery. Perhaps, he added, the Squire might know something of this individual. Would he oblige by calling at the station?

'I'll look round to-morrow,' said the Squire. 'The man may have no friends here, and we may be able to assist him.'

'Yes, do, father. It is even possible we may know him. Poor fellow!'

The next day at breakfast the Squire, who was reading a paper, suddenly exclaimed: 'Listen, Constance. "At Staunton Castle, on the 30th ult., aged eighty, Sir Clement Staunton, Bart."—This is news indeed; and observe, it is dated more than a fortnight ago. I suppose the lawyers have continued advertising the death after the usual time, in order to apprise Clement, of whose whereabouts they are probably ignorant, of his succession.'

'Go down at once, dear, and see the inspector,' broke in Miss Constance. 'He must be found. Double the reward, if necessary—treble it!'

'We have still no news of the missing man,' said the inspector, when the Squire appeared—'none whatever. But perhaps you can tell me about another of your countrymen, whom we believe they've got hidden away somewhere—a Baronet, Sir Clement Staunton.'

'Of course I can. Why, he is this same man. Less than three weeks ago he succeeded to the Baronetcy of his uncle. He was then living here under the assumed name of John Clements. But how did they know that he was now Sir Clement Staunton? That beats me. Does it not surprise you?'

'I do not wonder, sir, at your being surprised,' replied the inspector; 'but I am not, for I happen to have made a special study of these Buncoes, and can tell you all about their ways and means. In the first place, they make it their chief business to find out, through servants and others, who strangers from abroad living at hotels and elsewhere really are. In the second place, should their investigations result in the creation of a suspicion that a certain person might be worth running-in, he is persistently "shadowed." In the third place—But what you want to know is how it came about that they identified this John Clements with Sir Clement Staunton. I guess, sir, they arrived at that conclusion pretty much in this way. I take it for granted that John Clements has all the ways and manners of an Englishman of good position. At the same time, I understand he is employed at the opera as first fiddle. Now, it is not usual for Englishmen of his class to gain their living as musicians in a New York orchestra. Therefore, those about him place him as a man who has seen better days in England—a refugee, social or otherwise, who, under a false name, is lying low for a time out of the way. Again, it is nearly certain that by some accident or other it was ascertained by those whose minds were exercised about him that your missing friend was not only not John Clements, but that he was Clement Staunton, late —th Lancers. You will naturally ask of what value to them

would be, if entrapped, the body of a broken-down British Captain? I reply, none whatever, so long as the Captain was only Clement Staunton; but when he suddenly becomes, as they suspect, Sir Clement Staunton of Staunton Castle, Baronet, his value in their market shoots upward like a sky-rocket. You tell me that it was only yesterday you knew of the death of Sir Clement, though it happened more than a fortnight ago. But what was there to prevent the Buncoes learning the fact as soon as it was announced? Now, knowing them as I do, there seems to me to be no doubt that they had had their eye on John Clements as a possible victim from the very first; and that, when they discovered him to be Captain Staunton, they forthwith shadowed him: that they then noticed the death of Sir Clement when first announced, and immediately perceived, on the strength of the identity of names, the extreme probability of the Captain being the relation—perhaps the heir, or one of the heirs, of the deceased Baronet. If they did not run him in on this chance, they would not be the Buncoes I know. No, sir, you bet!'

'Very well, then,' said the Squire. 'The only question now remaining is the amount of the ransom. The present reward does not seem to be sufficient; it must therefore be doubled, or trebled.'

'I will see to that at once,' said the inspector.

The offer of an increased reward had happily the desired effect. At two o'clock on the afternoon of the third day, Clement, to the great delight of the Squire and his daughter, appeared at the *Clarendon*. After endless congratulations and requests to relate his experiences, he thus began:

On my way here one day, just as I entered Broadway, a man sidled up to me and attempted to draw me into conversation. He was not a bad-looking fellow; but as he was an utter stranger, I cold-shouldered him. Nevertheless, he continued talking; and at last, as I did not reply, said: 'I see you're offended, sir, at my presumption in addressing you.'

'Not at all,' I replied.

'Well, to prove that's so,' he went on, 'come round to my place and have a cocktail. If you're fond of books, I can show you some curious ones. I have a lovely illustrated edition of Longfellow, our national poet, you know. Perhaps you would do me the honour of accepting it?'

Not being at the moment in want of either a cocktail or a book, I declined his offers, and he presently departed. Continuing my stroll, I was soon again accosted by another man. 'Ah, Captain,' he said, 'how are you? You don't remember me?'

'Indeed, I do not,' I replied.

'Surely you haven't forgotten that day at Sandown when I laid you six to four in fivers on the field, and lost it? I was a bookey then.'

Now, I happened to be myself betting a good deal at one time there; it was therefore possible I might have had some dealing of the sort with this man. Still, I did not recollect him at all, and said so. Nevertheless, to be civil, I inquired what he was about.

'I am in the *curio* line now over here,' he

answered, 'got a ripping store down town full of pretty things. Will you come and see them, sir?'

'Not now,' I answered.

'Come, then, to my house and see some lovely bits which I haven't the heart to part with. There is a Stradivarius worth ten times its weight in gold. I won't keep you five minutes.'

I don't think any other fly in the world but a Stradivarius would have risen me, but I did rise to this one. A quarter of an hour later, we were standing opposite a door in a quiet street. He opened the door with a latchkey; we passed in, and mounted to the first floor. Opposite the staircase was the opening to a large room.

'In here, sir,' said my friend as he passed the threshold. I followed unsuspiciously. A man was standing looking out of the window. As I reached the centre of the room, he turned. In him I recognised at once the fellow who had offered me the cocktail. I turned round quickly. My guide was standing quietly with his back to the door, the key thereof in one hand, a revolver in the other.

'What is the meaning of this?' I asked him angrily.

'It means, Sir Clement, that you are Buncoed. You were hard to get, though.—Wasn't he, Charlie?' turning to the other blackguard; 'but Buncoed you are and no mistake.'

'Buncoed! What's that?'

'That means that you are the guest of the Buncoes for the present.'

'Who are the Buncoes?'

'Never you mind now who they are. But you need not be alarmed: so long as you're quiet, you will be well treated, only no bounce. Let me now offer you some refreshment?—No. Well, perhaps you may fancy something later.'

Furious, but powerless, I exclaimed: 'You called me just now Sir Clement. That is not my name. It is John Clements.'

'It is quite true,' he replied, 'that your name the other day was John Clements—to be accurate—your assumed name; but it is now Sir Clement Staunton, Baronet. If you doubt me, look at the deaths in the *Times* there.'

I took up the paper; and, sure enough, there appeared the announcement of my uncle's death.

'Now, look at the top of the second column, and I think you will find an advertisement there to this effect: "It is requested that the nephew and heir of Sir Clement Staunton, of Staunton Castle, Yorkshire, who is believed to be living in New York under an assumed name, will communicate at once with Messrs Jones & Co. of London."—Probably you did not see either the announcement or the advertisement' (which was there, as he said); 'but we noticed both; and putting them together, could come to no other conclusion than that John Clements, *alias* Clement Staunton, is identical with Sir Clement Staunton.—Come, Sir Clement; there is no use whatever your denying this. The easiest way for you to get out of your difficulties is to accept the situation and play fair with us, cards on the table. Remember that you are a rich man now, and that we run tremendous risks. What, then, will you give to be free? How much will you plank down? Shall we say five thousand?—pounds, not dollars.'

I laughed aloud at the absurd idea of my finding such an amount. 'I am quite willing to admit,' I answered, 'that I have succeeded to my uncle's title, but have every reason to believe that I shall not benefit by his will; for, although I am his next of kin, I am certainly, as you will find, disinherited.'

'Well, sir, the truth of the matter on that point can easily be ascertained by reference to our friends in England. Meanwhile, we shall have to detain you till we receive their answers to our inquiries. You will find here everything necessary, as far as is possible under the circumstances, to your comfort. But, remember, the key of the door is always in one of my hands, and this article here'—he lifted the revolver—'in the other.

At the same time a door opened, and another fellow appeared. With a polite bow, he said: 'Would you like to see your bedroom, sir?'

I will spare you any description of the weary days of my imprisonment, and only tell of what passed this morning. It would seem, then, from the conversation of my jailer, that soon after I was missed, some good Samaritan offered a reward for me; but that they had determined to await the report of their correspondents in England on the will before considering the question of its acceptance. This report came yesterday, and was to the effect that I was actually disinherited in favour of some distant relative. There being now no doubt of the fact, and considering the amount of the reward, which appears to have been doubled within the last three days, they determined last night to release me as soon as the money was secured. It came to hand this morning, and here I am. Voilà tout!

Let six months now pass away; change the scene once more from New York to Yorkshire. Look out again from the study window of Staunton Castle and watch the wandering sunshine stealing silently from the stream to the hill, from the forest to the flowers on the lawn. Turn again, and note the occupants of the room. You have seen them both before—one as Constance Brandon, boldly casting a bunch of carnations far into an orchestra, the other as John Clements, fiddling to a ballet; or, as Clements Staunton, uttering words of high disdain to a venerable relative. But how came they there? you naturally ask; for, in fact, the disinherited looks as if the place belonged to him, and Constance seems equally at home. 'Yes; how came they there? That is what I want to know, too,' repeats a hollow sepulchral voice. In an instant I recognise the imperious tones of the late Baronet, and perceive the dim outline of his imposing figure. 'Look at that blackguard!' it began, as with uplifted finger he pointed to the living Baronet. 'I cast him out, it was but yesterday, for ever from Staunton Castle; and lo, here he is back again, seated in my own chair!—What, sir,' he asked, 'is the meaning of his presence here?'

I expected Sir Clement to have risen at the question, delivered as it was in a loud imperious tone. But he never moved. Probably, he failed to catch the sound of the voice. It is not perhaps given to every one to hear the words of the spirits of the departed.

'His presence here, sir,' I reply, 'would seem to be accounted for by the fact that he owns the castle—or, to be accurate, the lady over there with the pug in her lap, Constance Staunton, *née* Constance Brandon, inherited it from you, and he owns her.'

The Ghost.—'And that is Constance Brandon, my next of kin after that scoundrel there—my heiress, sole possessor of all my wealth! It is well for her I suspected not that it would have come to this.—Confound her!—But tell me, sir, how it came to pass that in marrying this man she made the only marriage that could have defeated my plans?'

'It happened,' I reply, 'in this wise. Miss Brandon and her father were travelling in the States. In New York she met a certain prominent citizen, Mr Morton, who loved her; and she might have been "the happiest in the land;" but it appears that "she fancied a cove who played the fiddle in the midst of a German"'.—

Here I suddenly stop, for the ghost, who had been listening attentively with his hand to his ear, suddenly vanished—and I rubbed my eyes.

Had I been dreaming? Perhaps. And yet this story is not altogether a romance.

THE CANADIAN CENSUS.

THE Canadian Census has just been completed, and the returns sent in are proving a source of keen disappointment all over the Dominion. The population of the various provinces, as compared with that of a decade ago, is as follows: Nova Scotia has a population of 450,523, as against 440,572 in 1881. New Brunswick, 321,294, as against 321,233. Prince Edward Island, 109,088, as against 108,891. Quebec, 1,488,586, as against 1,359,027. Ontario, 2,112,989, as against 1,923,228. Manitoba, 154,442, as against 65,954. British Columbia, 92,767, as against 49,559. North-west Provinces Unorganised Territory, 61,487, as against 56,446. Allowing, therefore, for natural growth and the vast tide of emigration which has flown into the Dominion for some years past, the increase in population does not exceed 500,000. In the Maritime Provinces the gain is slightly more than one per cent.; in Quebec it is 9·53 per cent.; in Ontario, 9·63; in Manitoba, 148; in the North-west, 141; in British Columbia, 87·50; and in Unorganised Territory, four per cent.

The growth of population appears to be least in the provinces of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Prince Edward Island. The cause is not remote. These provinces are almost wholly agricultural, Prince Edward Island entirely so; but there are no large holdings. Hence, when the farmers' sons and daughters grow up, and have received a fair education, they flock to the United States of America, where they all receive immediate and remunerative employment, the females as domestic servants, dressmakers, factory hands, and store-waiters; the males as labourers, mechanics, and clerks. It is commonly reputed that the city of Boston alone includes in her vast population at least 40,000 Canadians and their children. This leakage is serious, but at present constant.

In the great provinces of Quebec and Ontario,

the increase, though pretty considerable, is at least 25 per cent. less than it should be, since in Quebec at least 80 per cent. of the population are French Canadians, the most prolific race in the world; and Ontario is in many respects the most attractive of all the Canadian provinces.

But in Central as in Eastern Canada the increase of population is checked by the same cause, nor is it likely to cease for a long time to come. When these portions of the Dominion shall have developed the numerous important industries which Nature has designed for the support of their peoples, young Canadians will have no object in seeking employment in the Republic across the line, but will remain within their own borders, where now they may earn an honourable and sufficient living.

It was to be expected that the returns would show a large increase to have taken place in the North-west Provinces, since thitherward the tide of emigration from Great Britain and, latterly, Iceland, has always set since the Canadian emigration scheme was first promoted; but here also the gain has been much less than was expected. For years past the statement that Canada contained 5,000,000 people has gone uncontradicted; we now find her population to be many thousands less, or about the same as that of London.

ROMANCE.

WHERE brooding rain-clouds, grim and hoar,
Drag and drip for evermore
On a sailless sea, and a sullen shore;

On the nether rim of a northern clime,
Where year to year it is winter-time,
And all things taste of the salt sea-rime;

In a brine-bleached tower, with beetling walls,
Where the raven breeds, and the seamew calls,
But never a shaft of sunshine falls,

There lived a maid, from her natal hour,
To whom the wilful Fates for dower
Had given a heart like a cactus-flower—

Warm, and vivid, and flame-like keen.
Such was her soul; but her face, I ween,
Was the ice-cold face of a polar queen.

And I—I came from a land of fire,
Where the pitiless sun-rays parch and tire,
And the shower and the shade are a man's desire.

I had drifted far on the sailless sea,
I had come long leagues. For it was to be,
And her woman's love leapt out to me.

Time and distance, longing and hate,
 wooing and winning, and all things, wait
For the rounded sweep of the scythe of Fate.

And the bars, and the bonds, of sea or land,
That the stride of a destined step withstand,
Are as bars of pith, and as ropes of sand.

S. REID.

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